

A Health Advisory From The Medical Director On MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)

Throughout the United States and especially in prisons, concern is spreading over containment Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). The bacterial family known as staphylococcus (staph) is common to all of us. Staph is found on our skin, in our workplaces and homes. However, a branch of the family is known to resist even the most powerful of antibiotics, and hence their name.

While diagnosis and treatment of MRSA is detailed and involved, prevention and containment is preferred. In 2006 Commissioner J. David Donahue authorized and deployed Sanitization Crews (different from sanitation) at each facility with the mission to provide chemical cleansing of all hard surfaces commonly touched by staff and offenders. It may be too early yet to determine the statistical success of this operation, but realistically it is certain to help minimize the spread of this potentially infective germ.

In addition to the important service that these crews perform, all of us have a responsibility to protect ourselves as well as those around us from potential exposure. The medical staff is expected to follow strict treatment guidelines for MRSA management, and the following are instructions good for both staff and offenders.

1. Wash your hands frequently and any time you touch anything wet.
2. Use soap and water when washing hands and your own towel or a paper towel.
3. Do not let anyone borrow your soap or towel.
4. Wash your towels, linens and clothes as often as you can.
5. Hang your wet towel and wash cloth out to dry each time it is used.
6. If you are working out, wipe down benches and equipment with a dry towel.
7. Shower or wash your body as frequently as you can.
8. Keep your space, including your bed and locker as clean as possible.
9. See your doctor or nurse for any unusual wounds, boils or pimples that drain and don't heal up.
10. If your doctor orders antibiotics, take all the medication.
11. If you have open wounds, keep them covered and have the nurse change the bandage.

Finally, don't guess. If staff or an offender has a question about a lesion or any drainage, the best advice is to see a doctor for assurance.

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About The Department of Correction

The Department employs over 8,000 employees and houses 24,000 adult and juveniles in 32 facilities, ranging from minimum to maximum custody, prison camps, juvenile facilities and work release centers. The Department's home page on the Internet can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection>. The Department's Re-entry Site can be found: <http://www.reentry.in.gov>.